

File Code: 1950
Date: May 23, 2016

Dear Participant:

The Thorne Bay and Craig Ranger Districts are evaluating a proposed action to collect seed cone from individual trees along existing Forest Service roads and adjacent Forest Service lands. Target species include Alaska yellow-cedar and red cedar, spruce, alder, hemlock, and shore pine.

The proposed action would take place on main Prince of Wales Island along existing roads and adjacent areas on the Thorne Bay and Craig Ranger Districts. Cone collections would be implemented over a 5 year period starting in the fall of 2016 at such places and times where a good cone crop occurs and is accessible to crews. Collections normally occur in late August or September when cones have ripened. Collection sites will be accessed from existing roads and are generally within a few hundred feet of roads. The Forest Service anticipates a total need for up to 30 bushels of clean cones per species over a five year period.

Selected trees will be cut to access the cone crop. Non-lethal collection methods (raking or pruning of branches) will be employed when feasible. Normally only a few trees per site will be selected for collection and cut trees are generally well dispersed. Both old growth and young growth trees may be considered as seed sources. All pruning and tree cutting will be performed by field crews with hand saw, pole saw and chain saw. No reforestation need is anticipated from this project and no ground disturbance is expected. Cones collected may be sold as a special forest product.

Cone collection falls within a category of actions established by the Chief of the Forest Service, which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. These actions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment unless scoping indicates that extraordinary circumstances exist. This category of actions is identified in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR 220.6(e)(12): Harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The purpose of this letter is to provide an opportunity to comment on the proposed action prior to the responsible official's final decision, which will be documented in a Decision Memo.

Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from Kevin Norrgard at the Thorne Bay Ranger District, at 907-828-3254, or by email at knorrgard@fs.fed.us. Oral comments must be received by June 17, 2016. Written comments must be postmarked by June 17, 2016. Comments may be sent to: Thorne Bay Ranger District, Attn: Kevin Norrgard, P.O. Box 19001, Thorne Bay, AK 99919.



Persons commenting must provide:

- (1) Print or type: Name, Address, and (if possible) telephone number;
- (2) Title of the project(s) on which comments are being submitted; and
- (3) Specific facts or comments, along with supporting reasons, you believe the responsible official should consider in making a decision.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in managing public lands on Prince of Wales Island.

Sincerely,



MATTHEW ANDERSON
District Ranger

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